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# GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: CARPE

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*USAID's Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) focuses on mitigating the effects of global climate change by protecting the forest resources of Central Africa. Working with local partners in nine Central African countries, CARPE is helping to preserve the region's vast carbon sinks with significant climate change benefits.*

**Background.** The Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) is a long-term initiative by USAID to address deforestation and biodiversity loss in the Congo Basin of Central Africa. One of the least developed regions in the world, the Congo Basin holds massive expanses of closed canopy tropical forests that are second in area only to the Amazon Basin. Unsustainable timber exploitation, shifting cultivation practices, and urban expansion pose increasing threats to this globally significant forest resource. Implemented by a team of U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and U.S. government agencies, CARPE works in collaboration with local partners in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and Sao Tome and Principe.

CARPE's work is also important for addressing climate change. With its vast forest reserves, Central Africa is the most important subregion of Africa for storing carbon and mitigating carbon dioxide emissions. As a result, maintaining the carbon "sink" potential of the region is a key objective of USAID's climate change program. In working toward this objective, CARPE uses local knowledge to identify ways to limit deforestation and retain the forest as a significant global carbon sink.

**Sector-Specific Climate Change Activities.** Since its inception in 1995, CARPE has facilitated dialogue between NGOs, timber companies, and national governments to improve overall forest protection. This effort has resulted in better forest management practices, a decrease in illegal logging, and a corporate sector reform initiative. CARPE has also supported studies to determine the effects climate change might have in the region, with a particular focus on the loss of the forest in the Congo Basin. Analyses show that without the forest, climatic patterns in the region would be severely altered and could lead to drought and major increases in temperature. The work of CARPE has therefore been vital in mitigating these effects and seeking solutions for the area's climate change challenges.

One result emerging from "lessons learned" by CARPE is the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) of 29 governments, international environmental associates, and business interests. The partnership supports a network of national parks, protected areas, and forestry concessions, and assists communities that depend upon the conservation of forest and wildlife resources. The CARPE mechanism has been selected by the U.S. government to serve as the primary implementation mode for its activities associated with the CBFP.

**CARPE's partners in climate change activities include\*:**

- African Wildlife Federation (AWF)
- Conservation International (CI)
- Conference of Ministers of Forestry in Central Africa (COMIFAC)
- Regional Ministries of Environment
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- World Resources Institute (WRI)
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

\* Because partners change as new activities arise, this list of partners is not comprehensive.

USAID's support for CARPE has proved beneficial not only to the countries of Central Africa but to the rest of the world as well. Preserving the vast carbon sinks of the countries in the Congo Basin is significantly mitigating the effects of climate change and protecting vital reservoirs of biodiversity.

For more information on USAID's climate change activities in CARPE, visit the USAID Web site at:

- <http://www.usaid.gov>